



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 80

June 2007

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at
Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 6 June 2007

Dr Andrew Storey (School of Animal Biology, UWA)
**“Ecological and cultural values of the Ord and Fitzroy
Rivers: links and lessons”**

Wednesday, 4 July 2007

**Max Clarke (former Head Teacher, Derby District High
School)**
“Twenty-five years of change in the Kimberley”

Wednesday, 1 August 2007

Richard Youngs (former RFDS Pilot)
“The Good Old Days of the RFDS in the Kimberley”

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meeting.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

“WINDMILL BABY”

The Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre production “Windmill Baby” will return to Subiaco Arts Centre (WA) for a two-week season (commencing 30 June) following critical acclaim at international festivals. Winner of the 2003 Patrick White Award, this excellent work is described as ‘a one-woman redemption piece told by Maymay, an old Aboriginal woman who returns to the deserted Kimberley cattle station that was her home 50 years ago’. See the back page for more, and for **special offers**.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

At our last three meetings, speakers have addressed the future of tourism, diamond mining and bauxite with the potential for mining on the Mitchell Plateau. Questions after the talks have been many and varied, reflecting the stimulating speakers and a keen interest in the subjects. There were always some questions and comments about possible harm to the environment and the impact on Aboriginal sites and communities.

I suspect that many of our members in Perth, having undergone the wilderness experience on the coast or along the Gibb River road, would prefer the whole area to be left in its pristine state. However those who live in the Kimberley often feel that the prosperity of the rest of the state, the Pilbara in particular, has passed them by, that making a living is a struggle and their voice is too weak to be heard in the corridors of power. They would embrace economic development which would ease their lives. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage social and economic advancement of the Aboriginal population without the increased availability of employment in tourism, or mining and its associated infrastructure.

It is hard for many of us to come to a well informed opinion, sitting as we are between the opposing fundamentalists who may exaggerate their cases: the developers for the benefits to the economy and the environmentalists who can find some plant or creature large or small which is unique to that particular habitat. As Oscar Wilde said, "Nothing succeeds like excess!" Nor can we be certain that the issues are objectively reported in the newspapers.

The Kimberley Society does not and cannot have any views on these matters but our members are obviously keen to be well informed, so we are willing to provide a platform for discussion. We hope that governments take the advice of suitably qualified and appointed panels of experts and scientists. In the end, ministers of state and our elected representatives to Parliament will have to make the final decisions. And we trust them, don't we.

Hamish McGlashan

LEEWIN OCEAN ADVENTURE

As most of us know, the Tall Ship *Leeuwin* is associated with challenging and adventure cruises and the ship is frequently seen off the metropolitan coast. The Leeuwin Adventure Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and relies on the help of volunteers.

We have received information that there are 12-day trips along the Kimberley coast from Broome to Darwin in July and August as well as shorter ones around Darwin. Volunteers and paying passengers are welcome and there is no need to be young, or to climb the masts and rigging. This certainly seems different to the usual cruises.

We have pamphlets available at our meetings but you also can see the Web site at www.leeuwin.com or obtain details by telephone (08) 9430 4105.

PADDY BEDFORD RETROSPECTIVE

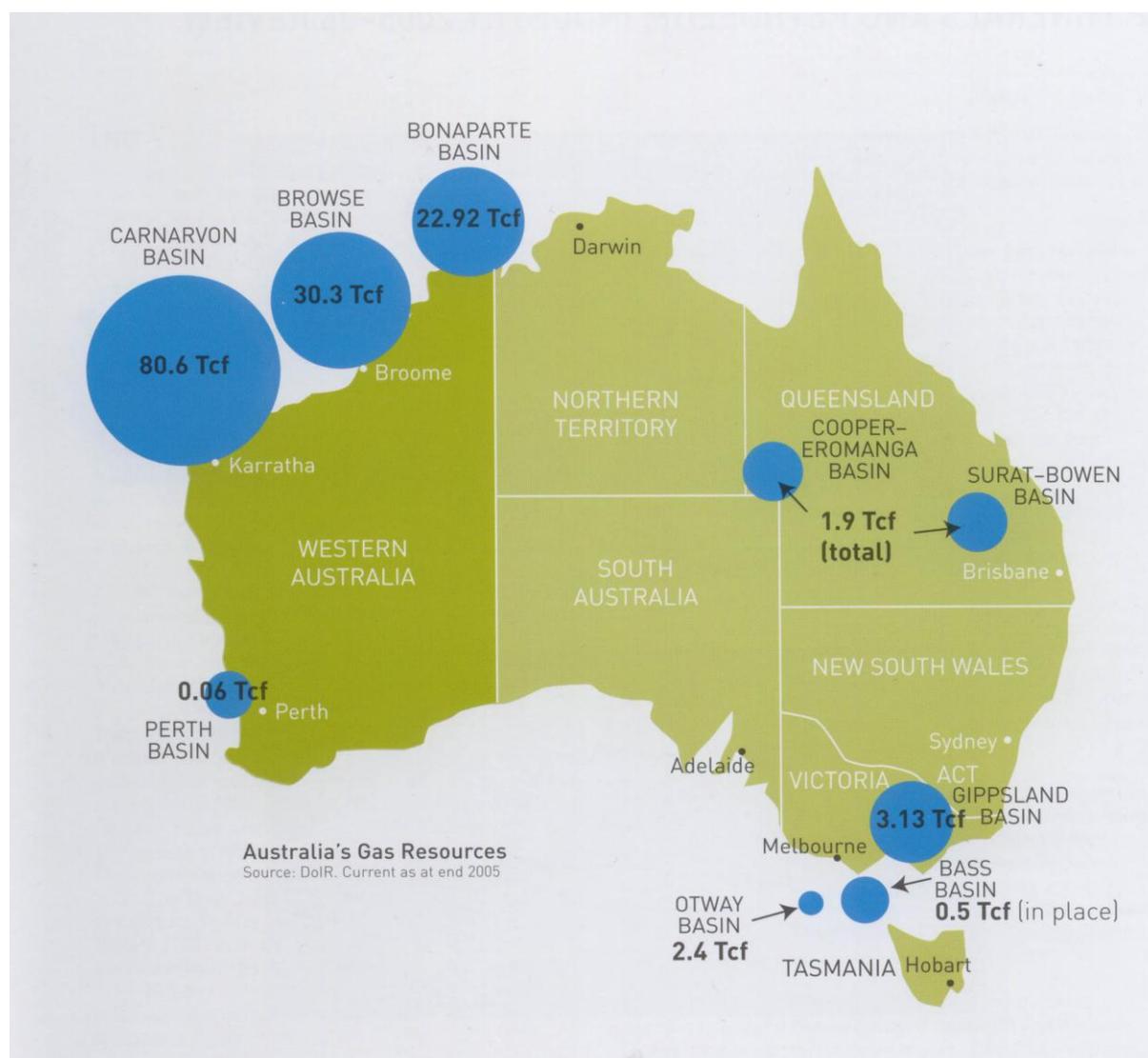
Members are reminded that, until 22 July, as part of an Australian tour, the Art Gallery of Western Australia will be displaying eighty works by senior Gija artist Paddy Bedford.

OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE OFFSHORE KIMBERLEY REGION

On 5 July 2006, Bill Tinapple, Director of Petroleum and Royalties at the Department of Industry and Resources, spoke on the oil and gas outlook for the Browse Basin offshore from the Kimberley. He reviewed the petroleum exploration history which had resulted in two major gas and condensate resources, which are world class in size. Condensate is the liquid petroleum recovered when gas is produced.

Bill also spoke about the outlook for further future discoveries in the Browse and how the area is one of Australia's most prospective areas. He then reviewed the outlook for oil and gas in Australia and discussed how important these resources will be for the national economy.

Our arrangements for providing a summary of Bill's talk unfortunately struck a snag. The map below, published courtesy the Department of Industry and Resources from *Western Australian Mineral and Petroleum Statistics Digest 2005–06*, shows Australia's Gas Resources (with trillion cubic feet measurements) at the end of 2005. The *Digest* also contains a graph that shows the speed at which the quantity of Western Australia's crude oil and condensate resources came to match and then overtake the quantity found elsewhere in Australia. We will aim to put that graph on the Society's Web site with this summary.



OBITUARY – TJUMPO TJAPANANGKA

Born 1930 - Died Balgo Hills 24 January 2007

The Australian newspaper published an obituary for Tjumbo earlier this year, written by Helen Read who was a former nurse, now operating art tours. Tjumbo was thought to be about 77 when he died. He is one of the original painters from Warlayirti Artists and had several works in their original exhibition at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1987. I met Tjumbo in the late '80s and always enjoyed talking to him. English was not his first language, however he had a lovely way of dealing with people and an infectious laugh. On one occasion I met him, he pulled from his pocket a collection of emu feathers which had been joined together for a ceremony of some sort. I wasn't sure whether it was secret men's business or not!

Michael Rae who was the second art advisor for Warlayirti described Tjumbo as one of his hardest working artists who would always present work of high quality. The obituary included one of his recent paintings of Wilkinkarra (Lake McKay) which was dated 2006. To me that painting was just as strong and as distinctive as any of the works he had done in his earlier years. Over latter years, from photos I have seen in art magazines and auction catalogues, he seemed to have adopted a bichromal palette, usually a yellow and white.

One of the funnier comments at the end of the obituary was concerning his ex-wife and painting companion Ningie Nangala who "growled at him to the end". It almost suggested that he was hounded to the grave!

Tjumbo was a lovely man and I am sure will be missed by all the people in Balgo and his extended family through the western desert.

Jack Vercoe

KIMBERLEY WATER

The renewal of interest in taking Kimberley water for the south of the State—reported in the last newsletter—appears to have ebbed. The Perth newspapers were full of it in April, largely because approval to draw an additional 45 gegalitres of water per year from the South-West Yarragadee aquifer seemed imminent. The aquifer lies beneath the southern ocean and the town of Bunbury, and the proposal to increase the draw proved as divisive as the one to take water from the Kimberley.

As usual, some correspondents writing to the Perth newspapers championed Ernie Bridge and his proposal for a pipeline. Then, shortly after the government announced the completion of its first desalination plant, Opposition Leader Paul Omodei unveiled his idea for a pipeline from the Kimberley. Hooked to a 20-year-vision for damming the Fitzroy, and portraying the West Kimberley as the nation's next food bowl, it was dubbed "Paul's pipe" as quickly as his predecessor's concept became "Colin's canal". The fanfare surrounding desalination soon elbowed "Paul's pipe" aside, and the government began promoting a sudden decision to build a second desalination plant. One of its advertisements contains the following information:

"What about water from the north-west?"

The notion of a pipeline or canal from the north-west continues to do the rounds. It's nothing more than a pipe dream. Consider this:

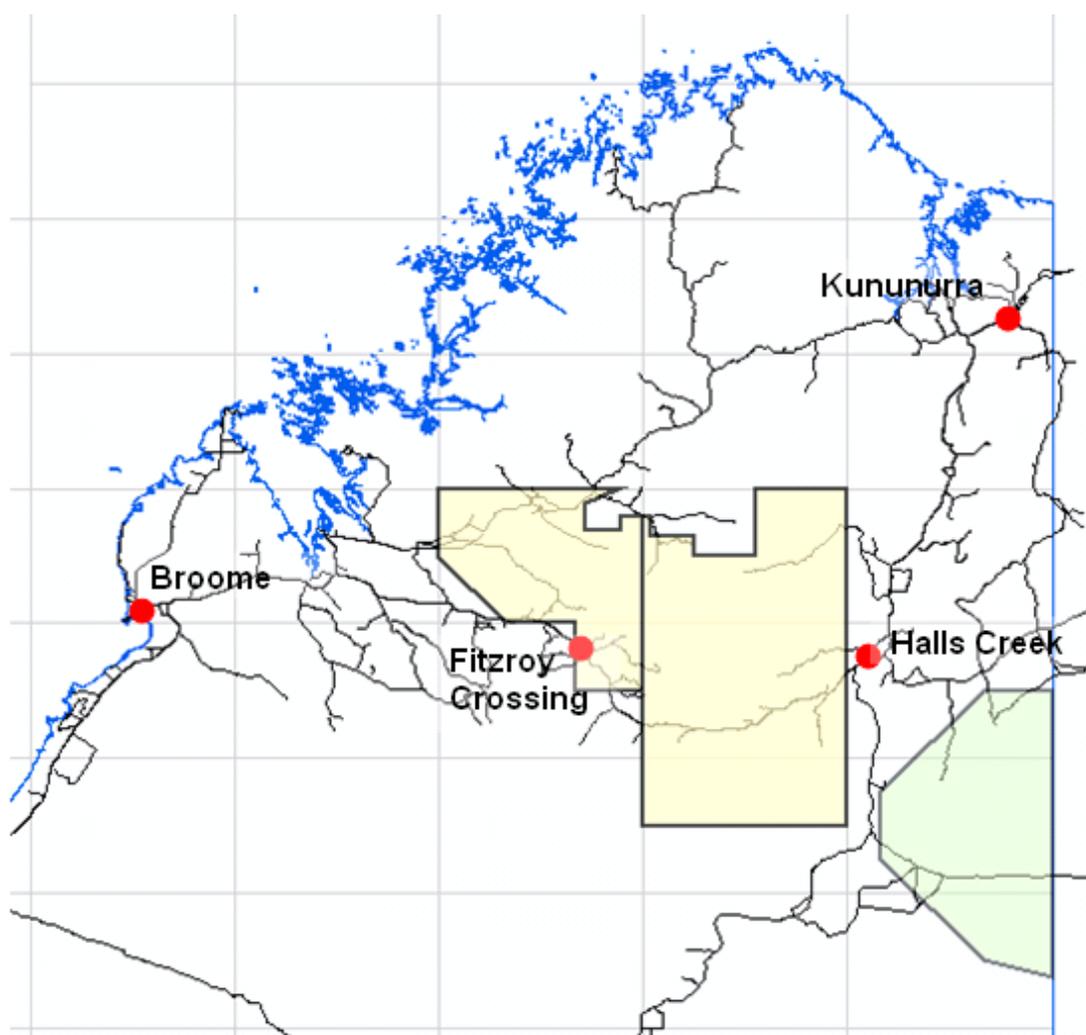
For the cost of building a pipeline from the Kimberley, the State Government could build at least 12 desalination plants. This would produce three times more water at one third of the price per kilolitre.

A Kimberley pipeline is unaffordable – it simply doesn't make sense.

KIMBERLEY GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

The Geological Survey of Western Australia, in addition to its main role of providing geological information in the form of maps, reports and GIS coverage of the State, also conducts geophysical surveys. The information from these surveys is used by the mineral exploration industry to guide exploration for commodities including iron, copper, nickel and gold. It is also used by local and State government agencies, for example to assist with geological map production, locating gravel deposits for road building, and selecting suitable sites for roads, towns, water infrastructure etc.

Starting in mid 2007, the Geological Survey, in conjunction with federal counterpart Geoscience Australia, will conduct an airborne magnetic and radiometric survey between Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, including the King Leopold Ranges and extending as far north as Mount House and south to Cummins Range (see map). Contractors will do the survey using fixed-wing aircraft flying at about 60 m (200 ft) along north-south lines 400 m apart. The data will be released by June 2008.



A helicopter-assisted gravity survey will also be carried out in late 2007. This survey covers a large area of the Tanami Desert country south-east of Halls Creek (see map). Gravity will be accurately measured on a 2.5 km grid to provide information about geological units such as granites or igneous intrusions and major structures concealed beneath thick desert sand plains. Much of this area is within Tjurabalan determined native title area.

Mike Donaldson

BOOK NOTE

North-West Bound from the Batavia Coast to the Kimberley by Carolyn Thomson-Dans. Department of Environment and Conservation, Bentley (WA), first published 1990, completely revised 2007, 148 pages, A4 format, colour illustrations and maps, ISBN 13: 978-0-7307-5568-1, RRP \$29.95.

Almost one third of the place-based information in this visually appealing book relates to the Kimberley. The places covered are: Kimberley rainforest patches, Broome, Rowley Shoals Marine Park, Dampier Peninsula, Derby, Walcott Inlet, Prince Regent Nature Reserve, Geikie Gorge National Park, Windjana Gorge National Park, Tunnel Creek National Park, King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park, Halls Creek, Wolfe Creek meteorite crater, Purnululu National Park, Kununurra, Mirima National Park, Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve, Wyndham, Gibb River Road, Mitchell Plateau, Kalumburu Road, and Drysdale River National Park. There is also a two-page entry for the Canning Stock Route.

The entries for the towns, as well as providing information on historic places within the town boundaries, also feature adjacent places. The Broome entry, for example, has coverage and an image of dinosaur footprints. That image and the many others throughout the book are of excellent quality. Each one has a credit against it, with most of those in the Kimberley section coming from people associated with Lochman Transparencies. Several others are from David Bettini, and one is from Ann Storie. Other Kimberley images by Michael Pelusey appear in the general part of the book.

Closer attention should have been paid to checking the accuracy of the history presented in the book. The Broome entry, for example, states that 'Aboriginal divers were often kidnapped by pearling masters to work on their luggers'. It is true that Aboriginal people were kidnapped and forced to dive for pearl shell, but that activity occurred before Broome was established. It therefore occurred before the time of the pearling masters. A similar problem occurs where the Derby entry states that 'Boab Prison Tree, eight kilometres from Derby, was used by police as an overnight cell for Aboriginal prisoners'. Legend says that this occurred, but, with no documentary proof available, a more circumspect account would have been preferable. Where accuracy is concerned, the account of the discovery of gold at Halls Creek is one of the most misleading I've yet encountered. In fact, its novelty is such that I have no idea where the writer found the information.

I sometimes hear people say that history needs tall tales to keep it interesting but, from where I stand, those tales need to be accompanied by phrases such as 'legend has it'. If that can't be done, government departments should stop putting unchecked historical anecdotes into books and onto maps and signage.

Whilst the shoddy history in *North-West Bound* will annoy some readers, the book does have much to commend it. The place-based entries refer readers to other books of interest, eg *Broome and Beyond* for information on bush tucker, *Common Plants of the Kimberley* for more general botanical information, and the little known *Bungle Bungle Range* from the Australian Geological Survey Organisation. That type of material, the clear maps, the guidance on the use of roads and tracks—and a host of other useful information about things such as facilities—will certainly assist readers who are new to the regions covered by the book. The advice on personal safety and on access to remote places is particularly pertinent and should, if heeded, prevent newcomers taking unnecessary risks or unintentionally damaging fragile parts of the environment.

Cathie Clement

KIMBERLEY FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA LTD.

Whilst a few Kimberley Society members are familiar with the Kimberley Foundation Australia, most of us know little or nothing about it. We hope to make it the subject of a talk later this year and, in the meantime, we can provide some basic information. It

comes from an overview and summary offered by Dr Mike Lisle-Williams.

- Kimberley Foundation Australia (KFA) grew from the engagement of its founding members with the Kimberley, as a means to understand more about the region's ancient art forms and to educate a wider public. In its early phase, KFA supported the pioneering rock art research of Grahame Walsh. In recent years, its focus broadened to address a wide range of research questions. The Board's thinking about a broader research program led to a new direction and determination to obtain large scale corporate funding. In 2006, the Board reviewed KFA's purpose and position, and committed itself to a longer-term plan to build up its capability and effectiveness so it could successfully oversee a substantial research program.
- While rock art remains important to KFA, the Board has adopted a new plan to encourage and fund a broad program of research. Donors have funded KFA to the extent that it can consider research projects spanning the next triennium. It will start with the preparation of a comprehensive archive of scientific research relevant to its major focus, thereby providing later researchers with a valuable resource.
- The fundamental questions that KFA seeks to answer relate directly to the origins, genetic profiles, social organisation and economy, culture and art, environment, and ultimate fate of the earliest inhabitants of the Kimberley region. The current state of knowledge is marked by much speculation based on many items of potential evidence. While research need not be confined to the northern Kimberley, it is anticipated that this area is especially salient in addressing the central questions.
- The Chairman of the Board is Justice Henric Nicholas of the Supreme Court of NSW. There are nine other members, including two traditional elders from the Kalumburu district.
- A scientific advisory panel is to be appointed by mid 2007. It will help to develop the research program and priorities and will oversee funded research projects, while liaising with the wider scholarly community.
- The Board appointed Dr Mike Lisle-Williams chief executive officer [CEO], commencing January 1, 2007. Dr Lisle-Williams is experienced in business, government, and academia and holds degrees in science, education, and social sciences and economics. During 2007, Dr Lisle-Williams will work closely with the Board to strengthen links and communication with a wide range of interested parties. He will also manage the research program, including the submission and evaluation of proposals for funded projects, and will maintain close connections with the donor body.

SUMMARIES OF PAST TALKS

Personal commitments and setbacks have interrupted our scribes' flow of summaries of past talks but we hope to catch up with the backlog in the next few *Boab Bulletins*.

“WINDMILL BABY”

Since opening at Subiaco Arts Centre in 2005, the Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre production “Windmill Baby” has toured regional Australia and Canada and has been presented at the Belfast Festival, the Salisbury Festival in England, and, most recently, the Mumbai Festival in India. It has even been performed in French, with writer and director David Milroy amused to find ten actors on stage for the reading at an international playwrights workshop at the Comedie-Francaise in Paris. He’d forgotten to mention it’s a one-woman play with ‘a laconic guitar-playing sidekick’.

Perth residents can look forward to a polished performance—with Rohanna Angus back in the role of Maymay—during the two-week season in Subiaco. The dates run from 30 June to 14 July, with the play commencing at 8 pm, and Kimberley Society members who get in early can take advantage of some special offers. Tickets to the Opening Night performance on Saturday June 30th cost \$50.00 (plus a booking fee) and include the after-show party in the foyer. Refreshments, gourmet bush tucker, and entertainment will be on offer, as well as the chance to mingle with the cast and crew. The party is going to be Kimberley themed, and guests will walk the 'red dirt' of the Kimberley instead of the red carpet!

If you're interested in going along on another night, Yirra Yaakin are offering an early bird booking special of just \$23 a ticket (plus booking fee) or, if you book in a group of ten, it's \$20 a ticket, plus one ticket free. If you'd like to take up any of these offers, call BOCS on (08) 9484 1133. “Windmill Baby” leaflets will be available at the June meeting.

COUNCIL 2007-2008

President:	Hamish McGlashan
Vice-Presidents:	Jack Vercoe and Cathie Clement
Secretary:	vacant
Membership Secretary:	Mike Donaldson
Treasurer:	Gilbert Marsh
Councillors:	Kevin Kenneally, Jeff Gresham, Daphne Edinger, Susan Clarkson and Adrienne Boulter

Grant Sellwood manages the Kimberley Society’s Web site (www.kimberleysociety.org). It carries summaries of the Society’s talks (as published in the *Boab Bulletin* but sometimes with additional images), FAQs, and information about the Society and how to join it.

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